• Not to charge penal interest in respect of current dues in default.

As a special dispensation for the agriculture sector, the Government of India has advised all the public sector banks to reduce their lending rate for agriculture to a single digit rate of not more than 9% per annum on crop loans up to a ceiling of Rs. 50,000/-. Keeping in view the importance of flow of credit to agriculture, in particular to the smaller borrowers who may not have the necessary assets as collateral, the banks have been advised to waive margin/security requirements for agricultural loans upto Rs. 50,000/-. NABARD has also issued guidelines on schemes for Redemption of Debts of farmers from non-institutional sources.

Deputing farmers for cultivating abroad

†198. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that farmers of the country are being deputed to certain countries of the world for cultivation;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for protecting the interests of the farmers deputed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) Central Government (Ministry of Agriculture) have not permitted deputing of farmers to foreign countries. Further information is, however, being collected from the State Governments.

Assistance to drought affected States

†199. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of drought ridden States during 2002-03 and 2003-04;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.